

# Mime Journal

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## Editor Note

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## Present-time Nō Plays

*ATAKA AND MOCHIZUKI*

Editor

**Diego Pellecchia**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The idea of this issue of *Mime Journal* dedicated to *nō* was suggested by Thomas Leabhart during a conversation that followed Udaka Tatsushige's performance of *Mochizuki* in March 2015. Together with Rebecca Teele Ogamo, we discussed how *nō*, the traditional Japanese stage art well-known for its use of masks and abstract dance, also contains dramaturgical and performative elements that could be associated with *theatre* according to a generally shared Western sense. We felt the urge to pursue research on the theatricality of *nō*, expressed best by plays belonging to the aesthetics of *genzai nō* ("present-time *nō*") through the exploration of two plays. *Mochizuki* was performed by Tatsushige for the first time in 2015, while *Ataka* was last performed by his father, Michishige, in 2014. This issue of *Mime Journal* collects the results of this research.

First, I would like to thank all the authors and performers for providing such wonderfully rich and diverse contributions. Monica Bethe and Katherine Saltzman-Li's guidance and Rebecca Teele Ogamo's assistance have been essential during the long road to the publication of this issue—thank you for your constant support and patience. It would not have been possible to complete our project without the meticulous work of associate editor YT Wong. I am also grateful to Udaka Tatsushige and Mikata Shizuka for providing the performance images that beautifully illustrate the essays in this paper, and to Columbia University Press for allowing us to republish Anthony Chambers's translation of *Ataka*.

Diego Pellecchia, Editor  
Kyoto Sangyō University

## FOREWORD

Leaving Etienne Decroux's Corporeal Mime school and returning to the United States in 1972, I noticed a lack of English language texts about Decroux and his mentors Jacques Copeau, Charles Dullin, and Louis Jouvet, as well as his students and collaborators like Jean-Louis Barrault. Also at that time little or nothing existed in print on what we now call "devised" or "actor-centered" theatre. In 1974, using the word "mime" in its largest sense, we published the first issue of *Mime Journal*; since then it has been called "an excellent publication" by the *New York Times*, "unique and imaginative" by the *Library Journal* and "fat...glossy and essential reading" by *American Theatre*.

At irregular intervals since 1974 *Mime Journal* has published 25 volumes:

Essays on Mime  
 Mask Theatre  
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 Jean-Gaspard Deburau  
 Traditional Czech Marionette Theatre  
 Etienne Decroux 80th Birthday Issue  
 Jacques Copeau's Theatre School  
 New Mime in North America  
 New Mime in Europe  
 Noh/Kyogen Masks and Performance  
 Words on Mime by Etienne Decroux  
 Canadian Post-Modern Performance  
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 California Performance/Volume 1  
 California Performance/Volume 2  
 Words on Decroux  
 Incorporated Knowledge  
 Theatre and Sport  
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 Transmission  
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 The Dynamo-Rhythm of Etienne Decroux and his Successors  
 Grotowski and His Legacy in Poland  
 Action, Scene, and Voice: 21st-Century Dialogues with Edward Gordon Craig

With changing times and new technology, convenience of publication and the possibility of reaching a wider audience move us to adopt this on-line iteration of *Mime Journal*. You may order back issues from Amazon and from the Theatre Department of Pomona College in Claremont, California.

We encourage your questions, suggestions, and submissions.

Thomas Leabhart, Editor  
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## DEDICATION

We dedicate this issue of *Mime Journal* to two remarkable artists and teachers no longer with us: Professor Emeritus of Theatre and Dance at Pomona College Leonard Pronko and master actor of the Kongō school of Nō Uda Michishige. Leonard with his deep understanding of kabuki, and Michishige with the challenges he continuously undertook in nō performance and mask carving, introduced generations of diverse students to these traditional Japanese arts.

These two giants in their fields enthusiastically shared the passion and excitement they lived through these arts. They refused to allow those of us, who felt ourselves outside perceived cultural barriers and restrictions, to be held in check. Following their example and urging, generations of students have themselves become revolutionaries, each individually influenced by these modest, rigorous, and generous masters.

Thirty-six years ago, in 1984, the *Mime Journal* issue *Noh/Kyogen Masks and Performance* sought to give voice to artists and practitioners, nō and kyōgen mask carvers and performers. This issue, in which both Leonard and Michishige were instrumental, introduced a broad spectrum of traditional artists as well as examples of cultural crossovers and experiments.

The present issue examines in depth two nō plays, *Ataka* and *Mochizuki*. As in the earlier issue, we hear voices of performers in interviews. Scholarly introductions provide background for the plays, their costumes, and for the genre of *genzai nō*, (“present time nō”), to which both belong. We include a translation of *Ataka* and a previously unpublished translation of *Mochizuki*. We also discuss *Kanjinchō*, the kabuki play based on *Ataka*, including its relationship to nō.

We hope readers will find value and inspiration in all of these articles. Although Leonard and Michishige are not here with us to celebrate the completion of this issue, they are surely encouraging us not to rest here, but to continue on to the next challenge.

Rebecca Teele Ogamo and Thomas Leabhart

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